

THE WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINES)
26 April 1976

J.S. Foreign Service Group Critical in Radiation Case

By Barton Reppert
Associated Press

The head of a group representing U.S. foreign service officers says he is worried about the possibility of an "official cover-up" in the State Department's handling of the Moscow microwave affair.

John Hemenway, president of the American Foreign Service Association, contends that a more thorough investigation is needed to examine the potential health hazards of radiation beamed at the U.S. embassy in Moscow by the Soviets.

He said in an interview that the panel ought to include persons with no government ties.

A CLASSIFIED State Department document, meanwhile, claims that aluminum screening recently installed at the embassy is 90 percent effective in blocking out radiation from two searchlight-like beams aimed at the building.

The document, prepared for use in closed briefings of embassy employees, provides the first detailed official explanation of issues surrounding the issue.

Although the report cites a variety of technical data, it fails to provide firm answers to several basic questions — such as the purpose behind the Soviet electronic bombardment.

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has called the issue "a matter of great delicacy which has many ramifications," adding that there are talks in an effort to get the radiation stopped.

But U.S. officials here and in Moscow have refused to give any detailed public account about the problem since it broke into headlines in February.

ONE OFFICIAL of the State Department said he thought "the way people around here are dealing with this is (they're) just hoping that it'll be forgotten."

Another, who recently returned from Moscow, said the embassy staff in the

Soviet capital is "still very upset about the whole business."

"They feel . . . people back here (in the State Department) are pooh-poohing it," he said.

A committee of the Foreign Service officers' group has been negotiating with State Department management officials to help ensure "health rights" of employees in connection with the radiation.

"We are not completely satisfied, but we have made some progress," said the panel's chairman, Harry C. Blaney.

Hemenway told a meeting of the foreign service association's board earlier this month that he believes the Soviet microwaves, first detected 15 years ago, "were not calculated to pick up intelligence but to cause physiological effects on personnel."

THE SOVIETS apparently intended to induce effects including malaise, irritability and "extreme fatigue," Hemenway said.

He also asserted that the radiation might be linked to more serious conditions such as cataracts, blood changes inducing heart attacks, malignancies, circulatory problems and "permanent deterioration of the nervous system."

"The possibility of a Department of State official cover-up would no be overlooked," said Hemenway, a vocal Kissinger critic who took charge of the associa-

He later indicated the basis for this suspicion was his view that some members of the association panel looking into the problem "are creatures of Kissinger" who would not embarrass the secretary.

THE DEPUTY undersecretary of state, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, said Hemenway's report was "full of inaccuracies, misstatements and erroneous assumptions."

The State Department's microwave report asserts that window screens installed at the embassy 2½ months ago "reduce the current microwave signals to a point well below one microwatt per square centimeter but not to a 'zero' level." By contrast, late last year the microwaves had reached a maximum intensity of 18 microwatts in certain areas of the embassy, the briefing paper said.

On the question of health hazards, the paper contended that so far "no cause and effect relationship has been established between disorders contracted by those in Moscow and their exposure to the electromagnetic field." It noted that "a full-

scale study of those who have served in Moscow in the past and those who are there now is in the process of being developed."

THE BRIEFING document included these other points, some of which have been mentioned but not confirmed officially in earlier press accounts:

• The United States first verified in the early 1960s that microwave signals were being beamed at the Moscow embassy.

• The issue of the microwaves was raised with the Soviet government in 1967 and again in 1969, but "without satisfactory results."

• Since October 1975, the embassy has been the target of two microwave beams. "Both are highly directional, somewhat like searchlight beams, but wider. They are aimed at the upper floors of the central wing of the chancery from different directions," the document said.

The upper floors of the 10-story building house the offices of the ambassador and other top diplomats, along with sensitive communications and intelligence areas.

The State Department account said the two microwave beams "are sometimes on the air simultaneously for three to four hours a day."